

THE GERMANS' PRESENT CONSERVATISM: ITS ROOTS

What the People Want

PETER SCHMID

"STRANGE," Frau Blumel confessed to me, when I visited her home in a modest housing development on the outskirts of a great German city, "we used to be much better off, before and during the war. My husband had a good job and influence as a party man. Now he only makes a fraction of his old salary, and works harder for it. But we are happier together now, because we need each other more. There are two sides to everything, you see, even war and poverty. . . ."

And yet they had both believed, when they were married during the 30's, that theirs was an ideal union. And things did go well in the beginning, until Herr Blumel's professional and party duties became increasingly demanding. Then came the

war, the collapse, de-Nazification; Herr Blumel lost his job. Instead of the one-family house they used to have, they now lived in a bare attic room. But strangely, this loss of material well-being, instead of estranging them further, joined them in a common struggle through which they really got to know each other for the first time.

Only after 1945, they both admit now, did their real marriage begin. Before, each had nursed his own plans in solitude, now they discussed everything together. They tried to please each other with little attentions. Social life no longer interested them; they hardly saw even friends. They lacked the means to maintain themselves on their old level. Also, many of their old friends had shunned them in their time of need, and they felt no desire to see such people.

"What about politics?" I asked Herr Blumel. But he didn't want to have anything more to do with politics—this, with a gesture of deprecation. He had never given particular thought to why he was active in the Nazi party; for him it had been no more than the duty of any upstanding German. Then came de-Nazification, and he suddenly saw people hauled up for judgment who had been untouchable the day before. Who could guarantee that the wind wouldn't veer again one day, and that support of one party or another wouldn't once more lead to ostracism? So hands off politics. Blumel had only one ideal left; to work diligently, and keep on working, in order to win back his old standard of living.

HERR BLUMEL'S is not an isolated case, and his gesture of deprecation towards the subject of politics was made, in effect, by millions of other Germans when they cast their votes in the recent elections. A

THE trouble outsiders have in interpreting events in Germany was made very evident by the recent German elections. Adenauer's triumph may indeed have set at rest fears that the Germans, after their total defeat, would embrace some form of extremism, either of the right or the left. But did it mean a real advance on the road to democracy? PETER SCHMID knows Germany as well as perhaps any outsider could hope to, having been born (1916) and educated in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, where he was editor of the famous Zürich magazine *Weltwoche* before embarking on his present career as roving correspondent and travel-writer. Since 1947 he has traveled throughout Europe, including Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, and has been in the Middle East, India, Southeast Asia, Japan, and South America. He is now on his first visit to this country. Mr. Schmid's two most recent books are *Spanish Impressions* and *Neighbors of Heaven* (on South America), both published in German. Irving Pfefferblit has translated the present article, which marks Mr. Schmid's second appearance in these pages. (His first was with an article on Indonesia in our June 1951 number.)

recently published book by a Hamburg sociologist, Helmut Schelsky, bears this out. The book contains more than its title, *Changes in the Present-Day German Family* (Ardey Verlag, Dortmund), would indicate. Its detailed studies of nearly two hundred families from all over West Germany add up to a description of the changes in every walk of postwar German life, and supply much material for political interpretation.

It was predicted in 1945 that the terrible, almost ferocious struggle for existence during the hungry years immediately after the war would produce a wholly demoralized generation, a generation without values or scruples, without restraints in any sphere, professional, sexual, or political. And the consequences of this would be an even more radical Nazism, or else German Bolshevism. What has happened instead? Germany has become one of the most bourgeois and conservative countries in all Europe. Herr Blumel's experience has been universal; the ties of family have grown stronger; marriages are more tightly knit. Young people hardly think of free love any more, but want to get married as soon as possible, find a place to live in, and have children.

All this was not anticipated because people looked to 1918 for a precedent. The slogans of that era were liberation from traditional bonds, the search for pleasure, faith in radical progress and revolution—all the things that are so spectacularly absent today. The reason for the difference lies in the wholly different situation that the German people—and, to some extent, all Europe—face today. Until 1914-18, bourgeois society had shut its ears to the tremors, consequent upon industrialization and urbanization, that were rocking its foundations. Then, in spite of the revolutionary years that immediately followed on 1918, the old forms of the Kaiser's Reich passed over into the Weimar Republic more or less intact. And the younger generation rebelled against these restored forms, which they considered obsolete—their rebellion being all the more noisy because these forms had never really been threatened. But the Second World

War came to a Germany that had undergone a radical transformation at the hands of National Socialism, in which the individual had been leveled and made even more anonymous than before. Then followed the loss of German territory in the East, the expulsion of the German inhabitants of that territory, the declassing suffered by millions of other Germans, the partition of what was left of Germany into East and West, and the forced detention of tens of thousands of German soldiers in Russia. In short, what the Nazi regime had left of the old patterns, and what it had itself newly created, were alike cast into the crucible.

IN 1945 the German found himself left, so to speak, with a clean slate as far as social values were concerned, and he had to react differently from in 1918. Instinctively, he grasped at and clung to those values which, amid the general breakdown, could at least still be realized in private life. The family group, breasting chaos, became the basic form of society—a kind of Noah's Ark in which you lived out the Deluge in the company of those closest to you, those very few others you could safely rely on. Whereas the unrestraint after 1918 was a revolt against social forms that had outlived themselves, the "restoration" after 1945 is an anxious effort to reestablish ties that have again become indispensable to social life.

Those who diagnosed this "restoration" as merely part of the process of convalescence have learned better now—or rather, worse—from Herr Schelsky's study. The old family was, as they used to say, the "germ cell of society": within its authoritarian structure children were taught the forms of human intercourse which they would have to apply when their consciousness broadened out to society at large. But the present-day German family is no longer exactly such a "germ cell of society," it is rather a bomb-shelter protecting its members from contact with society. What we began by observing in the Blumel family, namely the abandonment of old social contacts and a withdrawal into isolation, holds true not

only for refugees from the East and for de-classed elements, but also for most "normal" families in the Germany of today.

THIS tendency toward an isolated private life has its effects on German politics. The large turn-out of voters in the recent national elections should not disguise the fact that the average German looks at public affairs with indifference and skepticism. This, as we have seen in Herr Blumel's case, is part of the aftermath of Nazism and de-Nazification. Many, many Germans shun politics for fear of being held personally responsible for the acts of the whole community. The springs of social idealism, the hope of improving society by collective action—these have dried up. "The same is true," writes Herr Schelsky, "of the interest and approval that are accorded to the fundamental democratic rights of the individual—like freedom of opinion, of belief, of science, the press, and so on. To take this affirmation [on the part of the average German] of the citizen's right to freedom for a steadfast faith in democracy, ripened by political experience, would be just as false as to do the opposite and take the prevalent skepticism and indifference toward public life for a fundamental aversion to democracy. The personal liberties of the individual are acknowledged and affirmed because they protect the sphere of the individual's private life from the claims of political and governmental power, and thus meet the desire for depoliticalization and political neutralization. That these liberties are intended to serve as a basis for participation in public life, that they can only be maintained and defended by vigorous political and public activity, is not comprehended by those who approve of them. . . ."

Another sociological study of the German family, done independently of Schelsky's by G. Würzbacher (*Main Types of Contemporary German Family Life*), comes to similar conclusions. Of 164 families studied, members of 56 lived lives confined wholly to their immediate families; the members of 64 took some part in small, private social

groups outside their families; and only 34, or about a fifth, were interested in public affairs. The state was viewed by more than two-thirds of these Germans as an alien bureaucracy unrelated to themselves, and something it was best to keep at a distance from, in any case, by burying yourself in private life.

But might not this development be all to the good? Might it not act to check those totalitarian tendencies in the state that have brought so much misery to Germany—and the world—in the past? Might it not encourage the kind of critical individualism that marks political life in England and America, an individualism that interests itself in politics precisely because one wants to keep the state at arm's length? I hardly think that such a hope is warranted. The German attitude towards politics is still as unnatural, as unreal, as it ever was. Politics was never "refined" in Germany, and decent people preferred to stay away from it. For this reason, the late plunge into totalitarianism is felt in retrospect by many Germans as something passionate, bitter, yet luxurious, like a wanton sin of the flesh. Contrition for such wantonness has not inclined Germans toward Anglo-Saxon habits in politics, but rather toward those of the Mediterraneans, especially the Spanish. The Spaniard's lack of political instinct leaves his family as the only real form of community, and his politics usually degenerates into an anarchic and bloody struggle of all against all. Therefore it takes an authoritarian regime (not, however, a totalitarian one—and neither Franco nor Salazar is totalitarian) to keep the peace; external force has to bind together a people lacking inner cohesion. It would not be difficult to anticipate similar developments in Germany.

(For the caliber of the German politician himself, as compared with the Weimar days, has fallen rather than risen—not least of all because of the terrible blood-letting Hitler inflicted on his democratic opponents. "There are only about ten people among all our parliamentary representatives that are good for anything," a Socialist deputy to the

Bundestag told me, a man famous for his brutal frankness. "And we're always being borne down by the pressure of our own nonentities. They hate any and everybody intelligent. Their hatred pours in on us at fraction meetings like a flood breaking through a dam.")

Within the German family itself, things have changed too. Certainly mutual dependence often leads to a strengthening of human bonds. But at the same time it can narrow and over-specialize them. Because the family has become an emergency organism whose prime aim is social survival and, even more, social recovery, material concerns have become the most important factor of family life. The whole spiritual fabric that used to adorn the old German family has not only been shaken but in many cases has disappeared. The old ideal of a humanistic education has broken down into professional specialization. Time and money are often lacking for cultural pursuits. The religious revival that, immediately after the war, seemed to be giving new life to the churches has already waned, and love itself has become frighteningly rational and unromantic.

MOST of what was written about Germany in the weeks before and after the elections, not only abroad but in the German press itself, was no less patently false than what was written everywhere on the same subject in the immediate postwar period. Both Germans and non-Germans still tend to see things under the old categories, and thus they spy Nazism lurking everywhere, unchanged under the democratic mask and waiting only for another chance to raise its head. This—and the nervousness of the British occupation authorities—explains why Werner Naumann, onetime state secretary in Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry, could be taken for a political figure of importance.

Naumann, having escaped the trials at Nuremberg and de-Nazification thanks to an assumed name, had begun, through the import-export business of an old friend, to try to make contact with all kinds of people he hoped would support a revival of Nazi polit-

ical ideas. He was far from conceiving of himself as a political force, however, and did not dream as yet of a frontal attack on German democracy. "It won't be done," he wrote in the diary he kept in imitation of his old mentor, "with the *Badenweiler Marsch* and a new flag. We need a new style, new slogans, new concepts and a new language if we want to reform our people politically and move ahead. To reflect our position faithfully, these must be severely objective, meant in earnest, not clamorous or exaggerated for the sake of propaganda." Naumann wanted no mass movement; his goal was the creation of a "sworn brotherhood," a kind of leavening elite through which the forms of the Nazism of tomorrow would be created. For this reason he rebuffed both General Guderian and certain elements in the right wing of the Free Democratic party when they made approaches to him (at least this is his story, if not that of his rather inept co-defendants), implying that such a coalition of the right was still premature. He preferred rather to infiltrate those parties that, without being disloyal to the Bonn constitution were yet "open on the right."

A few weeks before the elections, Naumann was set free because the incriminating material turned out to be too meager to justify his further detention. Having been presented with the unearned halo of a national martyr, Naumann saw himself catapulted onto the political stage. The German Reich party, successor to General Remer's banned Socialist Reich party, put him forward as its leading candidate, together with Hans Grimm, the Nazi writer, and Ernst Rudel, one of Hitler's war aces, who had received Perón's personal permission to leave his post as military advisor in Argentina for this purpose. The German press aimed its heaviest batteries at this trio, and, to put a stop to Naumann's activities, the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, under whose jurisdiction he came, rushed him through special de-Nazification proceedings that debarred him from public office. A neutral observer could hardly avoid the impression that those in power were at bottom altogether unsure of them-

selves; some sort of optical illusion had inflated a third-rate Nazi into a new Hitler.

Hitler, the affair showed, is still so frighteningly close to most Germans that they are not yet able to consider him with any objectivity. Whatever vestiges of Nazism remain in their consciousness are repressed like shameful desires, and therefore any political movement seeking to link itself with National Socialism has to be crushed from the very outset. The Germans are swayed by a very strong need to stand before themselves and the rest of the world as perfect democrats—a need the like of which I have found only in Japan, where democratic sentiment rests on an equally precarious spiritual basis. And so the target is always being overshot. Another example was when a Bremen court judged a Senator guilty of slandering General Remer—he had accused him of desertion during the war—yet refused to punish him, on the ground that Remer had belonged to the forbidden Socialist Reich party—something that had nothing to do with what the Senator had said about Remer. This desire for political respectability unquestionably accounts for the catastrophic failure of the extreme right in the recent German elections.

NEVERTHELESS, the recent election campaign did leave one with a certain feeling of discomfort. Only the politicians were excited. The public watched apathetically and, in large part, with mild contempt. Like actors trying to get a response from an impassive audience, the politicians forced their propaganda to the point of hysteria. The Christian Democrats had the best time of it. It was the party of the Chancellor, the man who had led West Germany out of the humiliation of defeat back into the community of nations, and made it a sought-after ally. But it was by no means easy to reduce this party to an ideological common denominator. It had inherited the mantle of the old Catholic center party but it was no longer Catholic. Its second-ranking figure, the President of the Bundestag, Ehlers—in whom many see Adenauer's successor—is a former Protestant church official from Oldenburg, and the

CDU has achieved a strong position in arch-Protestant regions like Swabia and North Germany, actually winning its most clear-cut electoral successes in Protestant Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, and Hessen. "The enemies of the good Protestant," Ehlers explained to me, "are not the Catholics but the representatives of the secular world, the Liberals and the Social Democrats; in the fight against these, the Catholics are our allies. This is the reason for our exceptional tolerance of confessional differences within the CDU."

In the strictly political sphere, too, the CDU is a coalition party. Though it represents the conservative business class in large part, labor leaders like Karl Arnold, who heads the cabinet, represent a progressive wing within the party's fold. All these divergent tendencies within the CDU are held together by the personality of Adenauer—almost by that factor *alone*, and no one can imagine how they will be kept in line after his death (he is, after all, seventy-seven). And the CDU had to fight its election campaign on the basis of his personal prestige. His strong, somewhat arrogant features looked down from every billboard: "Germany votes for Adenauer," they said, and no other words were necessary.

The role that Adenauer's image, already beginning to be wreathed with the mystique of a leadership cult, played against the Social Democrats was decisive. With Schumacher's death, good old Papa Ollenhauer had become head of the party, and he found himself in the unenviable position of being forced, as the "rival *Führer*," to throw the full—but unfortunately purely physical—weight of his personality into the scales. His round face beamed from posters that offered an almost ludicrous alternative: "Not Adenauer" (with the name written in a wavering, senile script) "but Ollenhauer" (in strong, resolute characters). But one had only to attend the rallies of the two different parties to see where the personal strength really lay. Adenauer has never for a moment hidden his deep contempt for people, and precisely because of his arrogance he appealed deeply

to the faith in authority of the German people. But even Ollenhauer's sincerest friends could not help being bored by him.

IN THE face of this human handicap the Socialists could have won, or at least held their own, only by a clear, unambiguous statement of their program and goals. It was their misfortune that they possessed neither. The leaders of the party had grown up under the sign of the class war, and thought they had to hold fast to this slogan in spite of the fact that conditions had changed completely. For the German worker is no longer a "proletarian," and least of all does he want to be appealed to as one.

Professor Ludwig Erhard's economic policy, whose currency reform freed West Germany's economy from hampering controls, produced a boom that has lifted the country out of bitterest poverty into a prosperity which the workers share in, their standard of living now exceeding that of pre-war days. True, the average German worker can't afford a car yet, but he has a motorcycle, and lately a frigidaire has come within his means. Obviously, things are improving; every worker can see that merely by looking around him. How can he respond, then, to a party whose propaganda tells him that he's leading a dog's life? (Things are bad only for those Germans left out of the boom—people with fixed incomes, and the unemployed, whose numbers have steadily decreased to less than one million now, in spite of the constant influx of refugees from the Soviet Zone.) How can he respond at this time to propaganda that keeps harping on nationalization and a planned economy? The Adenauer side could point to the misery to which the population of the USSR had been reduced by the economic policies of its Communist masters; and the general hatred of the Communists, who invoke the same Marxist antecedents as the Social Democrats, could only hurt the latter. Erhard's economy had brought full stomachs: who would want to change that?

The position of the Socialists on foreign policy was just as hopeless. Schumacher had

envisaged a broadening out of his party's base to include the middle classes as well as the workers—with the example of the British Labor party in mind—and to this end he chose the issue of nationalism. The result was a paradoxical situation that saw a party, part of whose basic heritage was the ideal of international brotherhood, deserting this ideal at the very moment when its realization seemed in sight. And the reward for this betrayal was practically zero, because nationalism no longer has—or does not yet have—the power to sway Germans. This paradox was intensified by the fact that the Free Democrats and the German party, which proclaimed themselves the champions of German national tradition, were yet compelled by their loyalty to Adenauer's person to stand behind him in support of European integration and the Atlantic Community.

It would be wrong, however, to interpret this stand by the German nationalists as simply an accidental consequence of a strategy of coalition. German bourgeois nationalism is still vigorous, but the continuing partition of Germany has forced it to shift its position radically. Not only has the presence of the Red Army on the Elbe made it more anti-Communist than ever, but it has also required German nationalism to think, above all and at any price, of defense. Only Europe as a whole, with the Americans in reserve, can ward off the Red danger. And perhaps not merely ward it off.

A prominent representative of this kind of nationalism, a radio commentator, admitted quite frankly to me that the recovery of the German East would be possible only through war. When the European veneer peels off these German nationalist supporters of European integration, the old Hitlerian idea of a crusade against Bolshevism emerges. (It is interesting, in this connection, to note Senator McCarthy's popularity among these people. The radio commentator just mentioned knows the Senator personally, and has presented his charges to the German radio-listener as the undiluted truth.) Nazism, insofar as it still haunts German minds, has ceased to limit itself to

Germany, but looks to the whole world for support, and if another Hitler appears it will be one who will seek to rally many nations behind him, not just Germans.*

But this nationalism in the name of Europe, or even of the whole Western world, still lacks real political force. It is there only as a tendency. Germans are shocked and saddened to see the distrust with which the rest of Europe is greeting their economic and social recovery, and this shakes their faith in the possibility of realizing the European idea. The Germans want to make a new start: why don't the others welcome that? Perhaps because the desire of the Germans for a united Europe is seen too plainly as being, among other things, a kind of salve they want to apply to the bad conscience they have for past misdeeds. Good intentions toward the future are supposed to wipe out the evil facts of the past.

The German desire to forget the past is unmistakable and, with it, the hope that all others will do the same. Warsaw? Bergen-Belsen? Auschwitz? Didn't the Americans raze German cities with their bombs? Didn't the French let thousands of German prisoners of war starve? Not to mention what the Russians did—. The Germans see their guilt more as a universal than a national one. Of course, they have a share in that universal guilt—but only a share. And so with upright hearts they pray that most dangerous of prayers: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Or rather, expressed more colloquially: "Forget about it!"

But I do think that one of the ugliest of all the ugly ingredients of Nazism is on the point of disappearing in Germany: I mean anti-Semitism. Among those whom the Germans now want to embrace, after so much suffering "in common," are the Jews too. During my last trip through Germany I heard hardly one anti-Semitic remark of the old, spiteful kind. Not that anybody was beating his breast in remorse. Here too,

good intentions toward the future are supposed to serve as a kind of absolution for the past. Hitler's massacre of the Jews is thought of less as a sin and crime than as a terrible and, above all, *unnecessary* error.

COMPARED with the new conception of European nationalism, the isolationist nationalism of the German Social Democrats is completely out of date—and confused into the bargain. The principal difference between Adenauer's position and the Socialist party's is that the latter gives the reunion of West and East Germany priority over every other issue, national or international, while Adenauer makes European integration the prior one and sees German reunion as its logical outcome. The Social Democrats think, with reason, that the entrance of the Bonn republic into the European Defense Community would make it very unlikely that the Russians would evacuate the Eastern Zone. Adenauer's counter-argument, to the effect that the Russians, once faced with a strong Western Europe, would come to terms, disarm, and give up the Eastern Zone, is highly implausible. More convincing, on the other hand, is his warning to Germans not to exaggerate the strength of their position in international politics; the danger of becoming a mere bargaining counter between the great powers and of being sacrificed in an international horse trade requires them to seek the firm friendship of the strongest of these powers, the United States. The Social Democrats assured the public constantly that they, too, wanted to cooperate with the West, and that a reunited Germany would of necessity join the Atlantic Pact—which made their differences with Adenauer shrink to a question of procedure.

It was only a few days before the elections that an outsider, one Erler, a member of the Bonn parliament, came forward with a real alternative to the Chancellor's line: he asserted that a reunited Germany would have to adopt a policy of clear-cut neutrality. In any case, the whole reunification problem had become so complicated by now that only a fraction of the electorate could even begin

*See also L. Poliakov's "Launching the New Fascist International" in COMMENTARY for November 1952.—Ed.

to understand it. Therefore the confused position of the Socialists could only work in Adenauer's favor.

It is true that the Chancellor's position, too, underwent essential changes in the weeks before the elections. Earlier he had been reproached, deservedly, for showing a fundamental lack of interest in German unification. Adenauer, as a Rhineland, is much closer to Latin and Catholic tradition than to the Slavic tendency that stamps the German East. As mayor of Cologne after the First World War, he had not been above flirting with the Separatists who wanted to create an independent Rhineland under French auspices. And when, later, he sat in the Reichstag as a Centrist deputy he never in his heart recognized Berlin as the capital of Germany: "Now we return to Germany," he is supposed to have sighed once to a colleague as they boarded a train back to the Rhineland. For him the real Germany—the old German provinces of the Roman Empire—ended at the frontier that Rome had held against the wild German tribes to the east, and fate has decreed that this same frontier once again divides a Western from an Eastern Germany.

Now Adenauer has, of course, always stood for unification, but so tepidly that his sincerity was questioned. But after the uprising of June 17 in the Eastern Zone a new note of passion entered his speeches on this issue. And if his first reception of Churchill's proposal for four-power negotiations to work out a new Locarno had been cool to the point of rejection, he now became the loudest of all in calling for them, and began on his own to seek a solution to the problem of reconciling the Soviet Union's need for security with the realization of the European Defense Community. This capacity of Adenauer's to change his mind offered, to German voters, an attractive contrast to the confusion of the Social Democrats.

But there is no doubt that the importance to the West Germans of reunion with Eastern Germany has been greatly exaggerated. When the news of the Berlin uprising broke on June 17, there was excitement in the

Bundestag, in government bureaus, and in editorial offices, but not a trace of it was to be felt in the streets—streets where moments of political crisis used to engender an atmosphere heavy with collective anticipation. This time no one said: "Now it's happened! Now it's beginning!" The newspapers indignantly reported cases of particularly shocking apathy, like that of the teacher who burst into his classroom that same day shouting, "Have you heard the awful news? Our soccer team was beaten!" But any reader of Herr Schelsky's work would not have been surprised by this apathy. Passionate longing for German unification is largely confined to politicians and editors. Audiences will applaud enthusiastically when it is demanded from a speaker's platform, or in print, but the public feels no really burning concern.

That is why Adenauer won. He had the powerful influence of the United States behind him, and he had, besides, shown himself flexible enough to change his ideas to fit a changed situation. The Germans voted for this realist. But one should not interpret his triumph as evidence that the majority of West Germans have enthusiastically embraced Europe and the European Defense Community. It is just that they recognize where the smallest risk lies. There is no idea in sight for which they would be in a mood to fight. Freedom, democracy, and all the other good things that fell into their laps in 1945 after the Nazi collapse, provide—I can only refer once more to Schelsky—a pleasant framework within which to retreat into private life, but nothing more.

IF WEST GERMANY looks from the outside like a mighty giant amid all the chronic invalids of Western Europe, internally it is no less eaten away with political nihilism.

On the other hand, the laments of those pessimists who saw in the election results a rebirth of the "leader principle" and the one-party state seemed just as excessive. Yet from a certain angle these pessimists are right: the "Hispanization" of Germany, the disintegration of the political community into egoistic little cliques, does favor the growth of au-

thoritarianism, and Adenauer is not the man to find the temptation to authoritarianism easy to resist. Even during the last Bundestag he treated both opposition and allies with a high-handedness that has become notorious. Habitually, he made important decisions on his own, without consulting his colleagues or the responsible department heads. German diplomats abroad complained especially that their reports were not even read, that Adenauer improvised his international policies from the perspective of Bonn, and used personal envoys who acted over their heads.

IS ADENAUER a great statesman? Churchill compared him with Bismarck (no doubt not without the motive of encouraging him to adopt Bismarck's conception of a correct German foreign policy as one that in looking toward the West did not forget the East), and this comparison may hold good as regards the foxy shrewdness with which Adenauer operates, but not as regards his originality or creativeness. Nothing he has ever said betrays a capacity for more than tactical agility. His travels outside Germany have served but to satisfy a naive tourist's curiosity; they did not give him a deeper understanding of any of the foreign peoples he visited. (When he was in the United States he preferred to make a trip to see the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco rather than get in even fleeting touch with such an important factor in American life as the trade union movement.) In the recent elections he descended to petty, totally unfounded slanders against political opponents; a local court had officially to forbid him to continue circulating such statements. He told an American reporter that he knew that the Swiss government was lowering taxes for Swiss exporters to enable them to underbid German competition. This happened to be completely untrue, but Adenauer said, "I know it for certain because my son-in-law told me." This statement is typical of how the Chancellor sees everything, even political questions of international scope, from the narrow, intimate perspective of his family

and neighborhood. Down at bottom he remains, Chancellor or no, a mayor. . . .

The Chancellor's triumph—which was a little too triumphant even for the taste of many of his friends—will no doubt increase his self-assurance. In the days right after the elections a perceptible shudder ran through the editorial offices of all the papers and radio stations that had defied the Chancellor in any way. A new and severer press law is in preparation, penalizing slanderous utterances about public authorities and the leakage of political news or information. Other measures, introduced the day after the elections, are aimed at the German Federation of Trade Unions, whose membership, being nine-tenths Social Democratic, had rather recklessly abandoned their neutrality to campaign for the Socialists. Now Adenauer has demanded that the Federation's Christian wing, which stands closest to the CDU, be given a larger role in the determination of the organization's policy, though it has only 10 per cent of the six million members of the Federation behind it. The German trade union movement is thus threatened with the predominance of a government-sponsored minority within its own ranks, or else a division into competing groups that obtained before 1933 and eased the way for Hitler.

All these tendencies will bring with them a further weakening of the political equilibrium between left and right in Germany. On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that the ruling CDU party is anything but homogeneous; rivalry among its component groups will keep it from following any too single-tracked a policy. The Protestants have already been alarmed by the demand made in certain Catholic circles for an openly clerical policy. At the same time many prominent Christian trade-unionists have set themselves resolutely against the threatened split in the Trade Union Federation, fearing that when that happens the progressive and labor wing of the CDU will be sacrificed to the conservative wing of the party. As it looks now, Adenauer will be kept in check by the necessity for tacking between the opposing tendencies inside his own party.